

The President's Weekly Address

July 2, 2016

Hi, everybody, and happy Fourth of July weekend. On Monday, Michelle, Malia, Sasha, and I will celebrate the Fourth just like most of you: in the backyard. We'll hang out with family and friends, throw some burgers and dogs on the grill, and watch the fireworks show.

Of course, we're fortunate enough to have the South Lawn as our backyard. So we're going to fill it with hundreds of our troops, our veterans, and their families. Over the past 7½ years, it's become one of my favorite traditions. We get to celebrate our freedoms while doing what we can to honor all those who serve and sacrifice to make that freedom possible. And I know that honoring our servicemembers, our veterans, and their families is something that so many Americans try to do every day, without fanfare or expectation of anything in return.

For the past 5 years, Michelle and Dr. Jill Biden have tried to follow the example of so many of those Americans with their Joining Forces initiative. They've rallied businesses to hire more than 1.2 million veterans and military spouses and helped to reduce veteran homelessness. And just this week, Michelle and Jill announced a breakthrough on a concern they've heard again and again from the military spouses they spend so much time with, and that's the issue of professional licensing.

This is something that most Americans aren't familiar with. But for military families, it's a big challenge. Here's why. Our troops are often transferred from base to base. It's part of the job. And because their families serve with them, that means their spouses move 10 times more often than the rest of us. Ten times more often. As you might expect, that's tough on a career. And more than one in three of these spouses works in a profession that requires a professional license or certification: nurses, childcare providers, accountants, social workers, and lots of other jobs.

And until recently, when these spouses were asked to move across State lines, they often needed to recertify for a job they're already qualified for. A nurse with years of experience might have to take entry-level courses or pay a fee or wait months for paperwork to be processed before he or she could get back to work on the job they love and that lets them support their families.

It didn't make any sense. So we changed it. When Michelle and Jill took up this cause 5 years ago, only three States had taken action on military spouse licensing. But they rallied Governors and State legislatures into action. And this week, we reached a milestone. Today, all fifty States have acted to streamline many of these licensing issues. This is a big step forward, but we're not done yet. We're going to keep working with States to make licensing simpler for more jobs and reach more qualified workers. But we can finally say to so many of our military families, when you move, you'll no longer be forced to put the career you love on hold just because you and your family have chosen to serve this country.

That's what this is all about: serving our men and women in uniform as well as they have served us. But you don't have to be a Governor or a First Lady to make a difference. So this holiday weekend, take a look at joiningforces.gov to find out how you can serve the troops, veterans, and military families in your community.

And to all our brave men and women in uniform: You represent the best of who we are as a nation. On this day and every day, we thank you.

Have a great Fourth of July, everybody.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:10 p.m. on July 1 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on July 2. In the address, the President referred to Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 1, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 2. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

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